

The Best Solution for Solana Beach & Encinitas is as stated on the Army Corps of Engineers Web Page [www.army/shoreprotection](http://www.army/shoreprotection)

**"PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS:** It often makes good economic sense to cooperate in building a single device to retard or arrest erosion, such as a FILLED or perched beach, breakwater, bulkhead, or revetment.....It has the added advantage of protecting against flank erosion. In some cases, it may be wise for entire communities to cooperate in erosion control.

**'BEACH FILL:** When there is a net loss of sand on a beach there is increased danger of damage as the water line advances inland. Adding fill to a beach is often both economical & effective. It increases the width of the backshore moving the high water line farther offshore. Cost depends on rate of loss from the beach. In some cases sand loss can be substantially reduced or eliminated by the use of breakwaters or groins.

**'REVETMENTS:** These are structures placed on banks or bluffs in such a way as to absorb the energy of incoming waves. They are usually built to preserve the existing uses of the shoreline and to protect the slope. Like seawalls they protect the land behind them. They may be watertight, covering the slope completely, or porous, to allow water to filter through after the wave energy has been dissipated. Most revetments do not significantly interfere with transport of littoral drift. They do not redirect wave energy to vulnerable unprotected areas. Accelerated erosion there after the revetment is built can be controlled with a beach-building or beach-protecting structure such as a groin or a breakwater.

**'COMBINATION METHODS:** Careful evaluation is always required to identify the most appropriate combinations of erosion control measures for a given site."

Then quoting from Charles Damm's report Copyright 1997 Damm on [www.asu.edu/caed/proceedings97/damm](http://www.asu.edu/caed/proceedings97/damm)  
**"COASTAL PLANNING IN THE SAN DIEGO REGION.** The Coastal Commission was born of controversy in 1972 and, to this day, it is an agency that remains embroiled in controversy.

**'MISSED OPPORTUNITIES:** Much has been accomplished but there is still the lack of a comprehensive plan to deal with the shoreline erosion issue before it reached the current crisis stage (this was 1997 no less).

**"GOALS FOR THE FUTURE:** 1. Work to develop innovative ways to better provide safe and adequate public access while minimizing conflicts which can occur between beach users and private property owners. 2. Continue the work with SANDAG & coastal cities on providing comprehensive beach nourishment program that includes financing strategies. 3. Work to balance the need to protect existing development in danger from erosion with the need to protect public beaches and scenic bluffs."

The above is a summary of things we all know about Solana Beach & Encinitas. I would like to press the following points:

1. **In Solana Beach seawalls do not cause the erosion.** All the experts agree that the majority of the erosion is from lack of sand from the north thanks to the Oceanside Harbor and damned rivers to the north. (I found it ironic at the CCC hearing last Oct. 15, 1999 when citizens of Oceanside were testifying for the benefits of paving over 8 acres of sand for parking for the Manchester Project they were saying "We have so much sand north of the harbor we won't miss the 8 acres being paved over.")

The sandiest beach currently in Solana Beach is in front of a long-standing seawall in front of the Del Mar Beach & Tennis Club just north of Dog Beach.

At most times of the year in Del Mar they have deep beautiful beaches even where there are seawalls on the beaches to protect the homes.

Yet, where there are no seawalls between Fletcher Cove going north beyond 231 Pacific, we have had almost no sand the last few years and there is rock bottom exposed much of the time. When we bought our home in 1966 the sand was 12 to 15 feet deep at the base of the bluff – now it is no more than 6 inches at the best of times. Each storm takes more sand out to sea and to the south. There is none coming from the north to replace it.

2. It is not true that in Solana Beach revetments would take away beach access or will cause more erosion. Now that the bluffs have been allowed to deteriorate to where they have become deadly, the public is warned to stay 30 feet away for their safety. So public access is a mute point. Another plus is that marine life can live in revetments such as riprap. If we should ever get 10 to 12 feet of sand back on the beaches the riprap will be covered. Then it won't show but will have done its job protecting the bluffs.

When 5 homeowners on Pacific Avenue were allowed to place riprap at the bottom of their bluff in March 1998 during the El Nino storms - all vibrations stopped for the three months the riprap was in place. **THE DAY WE WERE FORCED TO REMOVE THE RIPRAP THE VIBRATIONS BEGAN IMMEDIATELY AND CONTINUE OFF AND ON TO THIS DAY. ONE HAS TO KNOW THAT THE CONSTANT POUNDING IS WEAKENING THE BLUFFS. RIPRAP BREAKS UP THE FORCE OF THOSE WAVES. (IN 1966 BEFORE THE LOSS OF SAND REACHED US THE WAVES RARELY TOUCHED THE BLUFFS.)**

**3. Cities all over the world protect themselves with seawalls.** They do need to be maintained and monitored. Materials and technology are improving all the time.

**4. San Diego Beach Erosion has been studied to death.** The Army Corps of Engineers has done extensive studies. (See the beginning quotations above from their web page.) The Solana Beach Coastal Preservation Association (a private group of 30 homeowners) spent \$ 90,000 doing an extensive study on beach erosion at the request of the Coastal Commission in 1998 before we were allowed to even consider any protective devices. The City of Encinitas has spent thousands of dollars as has the City of Solana Beach. It goes on and on. A good many of the experts agree that the combination of seawalls, revetments and sand being deposited on the beach on a regular basis would be a solution to the problem at this late date. Remember seawalls can be very natural looking so that you can't tell the seawall from the natural sandstone. However if we let the waves continue to erode the base of the bluffs until there is a shearing off of the bluffs above they then start eroding from the top and undermining the homes. At that point it takes an almost prohibitive \$1 million dollar structure to save the home & lives.

The Coastal Commission is finally allowing seven consecutive homes in Solana Beach to fill the undercuts made the past two years by the ocean to help prevent the bluffs from shearing off. This will be a small test of our theory for the best action to be taken. The project will be continuously monitored and maintained at homeowners' expense. The infills are a big step forward, but I am sure many experts would agree that the best case scenario would be to have riprap in front of the fills. But the powers that be will not allow this. Regardless of how beneficial it is riprap is considered a dirty word.

The rest of those 30 Solana Beach homeowners plus many others want to be part of a comprehensive effort to protect the bluffs. So far it has all been at the expense of the property owners but the public needs to foot its share of the financial responsibility. Everyone will benefit. In 1998 Rep. Duke Cunningham said he served on the Army Corps of Engineers Committee and could get results - we are still waiting for the money to be spent. Delay - delay & delay.

As stated in the above reports **we must have a combined comprehensive effort. We can save our bluffs and public and private property. LIVES DO NOT NEED TO BE LOST. Doing nothing helps no one. Doing new studies each year accomplishes very little if anything and the delay is putting more lives at risk and allowing more and more erosion to take place, when it could be stopped with constructive action now. Preservation means saving and maintaining, NOT just letting it erode.**

**Final Comment: One Gentleman in last week's Coast Dispatch recommended condemning all homes on the bluffs, removing said homes, and then tapering the bluffs back at a 30 degree angle. I am not sure if he thought homeowners should be reimbursed for their property, but aside from that the property taxes on the 54 bluff-top homes in Solana Beach each bring in up to \$2000 per month in taxes times 54 = \$1,200,000 per year. Those are tax dollars that could never be replaced. (ALSO THAT AMOUNT OF SAND WOULD LAST ABOUT 3 TO 6 MONTHS ON OUR BEACHES AS THEY ARE TODAY.)**

By Ann Baker, 219 Pacific Ave., Solana Beach 858-481-1011 2/8/2000

From: Ann Baker (P-23)  
219 Pacific Avenue  
Solana Beach, CA 92075  
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November 20, 2000

Honorable Council Members of Solana Beach  
Attn: Steve Apple & Bob Semple

Re: Corn/Scism Bluff Project # 17-00-25  
Re: Requests for an EIR & a Moratorium on Bluff Projects

Per se, I am not against an EIR, although I think it is an unnecessary expense for the tax-payers of Solana Beach and one that is not required because the 1972 Coastal Act gives property owners the right to protect their properties and as all other options have been studied and found to be unfeasible. The Surfriders and their friends continue to seek every way possible to take away the rights of the homeowners supposedly because of their (the Surfriders & Friends) following concerns:

1. They have an unfounded fear that "these projects interfere with my right to access and enjoy the public beach." **The sooner these projects are allowed to proceed, the less the damage is and thus the less time required on the part of the contractors on the beach.**
2. Public Access Impacts. - They value the public's ownership of public beach and access as their inherent right. **There are no public access impacts. The public is warned to stay 45 feet from the bluffs for safety. The woman killed in Encinitas early this year was sitting 45 feet from the bluff when it collapsed on her. If infills are allowed early in the process (before the bluff collapses) they are completely under the drip-line & do not take away any beach.**
3. Visual/aesthetic Impact: **As the pictures will show, we have used the latest in technology, the most competent of engineers and contractors who have designed & built very attractive infills. The average person can not tell that undercuts have been filled with concrete. So the work should no longer impact anyone's aesthetic view.**
4. Economic Issues: (Concern about local, state or federal subsidies or construction to protect private property or insurance coverage: **Neither insurance nor public monies has ever been a consideration. Every dime spent has been at the expense of the homeowners. However, I understand that the Army Corps of Engineers is looking into the feasibility of righting a wrong done to the North County beaches by many of their projects that deprive our beaches of sand, including the Oceanside harbor they built 50 years ago. As to insurance I do not personally know of any homeowner that has insurance that covers his home should it fall into the ocean. I do not think any is available. However, until the last few years I never dreamed it was anything with which to be concerned.**
5. Loss of Sand Supplied by Eroding Bluffs Which Become Armored: **Each homeowner is now paying a \$ 13,000 Sand Mitigation (I call it Extortion) Fee. Steve Aceti told me there was a report a few years ago by Gary Griggs of UC Santa Cruz which found that seawalls do not cause erosion. Mr. Aceti is Exec. Director of the Environmental Group 'The California Coastal Coalition, a well respected non-profit advocacy organization comprised primarily of coastal cities and counties dedicated to beach restoration, wetlands recovery and improved ocean water quality. Also the US Army Corps of Engineers stated in the Encinitas Reconnaissance Report (1996) that the bluffs in North County did not historically contribute much sediment to the beaches.**
6. Active & Passive Erosion: The activists claim that a seawall will have adverse impacts on local sand supply & beach access. They claim that "Solana Beach has shown the formation of sea caves and other signs of erosion even prior to human intervention such as harbors, jetties and dams": **Any erosion before that time was minimal. The sandiest beach in all of Solana Beach is in front of the 18-year-old seawall in front of the Del Mar Beach & Tennis Club. Since their seawall was built they have experienced no problems. Whereas at 141 to 231 Pacific the erosion was way down to bed rock, plus there were enormous caves that grew to 670 cubic yards in the last two years when we were allowed to do nothing. The undercuts became 8 feet deep and 6 to 8 feet high in just the two years that it took to go through the process to complete the work. (Delays were caused when some activists presented a lot of misinformation that then had to be investigated by the California Coastal Commission before our permits could be granted - this caused over 8 months in delays.)**
7. Bluff Armoring Kills Public Beaches. They quote Dr. Reinhard E. Flick's "Shoreline Erosion Assessment & Atlas of the San Diego Region, Vol. 1 (1994): **On 11-20-00 I spoke with Mr. Flick and he is willing to speak to this issue and how this quote is taken out of context. He does not believe the infills and seawalls in Solana Beach will cause more erosion and thinks that we should have the right to protect our property.**

**You will also notice that studies often referred to that say erosion is inevitable and that seawalls do not work have not been studies that relate to our bluffs. Many are irrelevant studies from the East Coast and the Gulf States with flat areas &/or sand dunes and where hurricane conditions exist to wash away the sand. (Yet on the East Coast they keep trucking in or dredging up the sand.)**

8. **Edge Effect Erosion:** This same group of citizens (Surfriders and friends) at the CCC hearing last month managed to encourage the CCC to deny the homeowner at 197 Pacific his request to fill in his undercut (because it was 'not enough of an emergency'). Now he has the only property that has no protection between two homeowners in a row of 9. This makes no sense at all because it will be allowed to be eaten away until his home is in much greater danger of falling in the ocean. Those on either side are attractive natural looking bluffs with natural looking infills, but 197 Pacific is being forced to suffer the edge effect. There need be no edge effect in Solana Beach with proper care and monitoring as mandated. The activists can't have it both ways – They want no edge effect, but they work to see that we aren't allowed to prevent it.
9. **Moratorium:** It would be unconscionable & criminal to force homeowners to sustain more damage, thus larger seawalls down the road and then of course a much greater expense on the part of the homeowner. The price of the infills ranged from \$ 50,000 to \$ 100,000/homeowner. If made to wait until a bluff slips away the cost goes up to \$ 1 million.
10. **Homeowners:** As per Surfriders, "we recognize the difficult position some of our neighbors are presently in, but our rights to the public beach must be protected." If they are so concerned about public access, sooner rather than later is the best policy when no public beach will be taken up, (witness the latest infills at 201 to 231 Pacific) and the bluffs will be much safer for all. The longer you make us wait the larger the protective device to which we are entitled as per the 1972 Coast Act.
11. **Homeowners are supposedly all wealthy and all selfish:** Some of us bought our property over 34 years ago when we had very little money. At what point did we become selfish? At what point are we supposed to lose our rights? Some retirees are being forced to sell as they can not afford the repairs as the costs go up with the delays & thus the added erosion. It is so unnecessary. There will always be people out there willing to buy and then spend the money to protect a home on the bluffs.
12. **Revise local codes to reduce front yard setbacks and move homes away from the bluffs** is being recommended by some of the activists: **We have done this study at the request of the CCC and it is not feasible. Another ridiculous study.**
13. **Some are recommending that the City Purchase All the Bluff Properties and Remove the Homes:** **We are talking over \$ 100 million for just the homes on Pacific and who knows how much for all the Condos on Sierra. Is the City really ready for this kind of expense and the loss of \$ 1 to \$ 2 million in property taxes each year, plus the cost of tearing down the homes? You will have to decide whether to protect the street at the city's expense. At least now the homeowners are footing the bill.**  
  
Another quote from Steve Aceti: "You could remove all the homes from the coast and you still wouldn't have nice sandy beaches. ....The face-off between proponents of planned retreat and homeowners incites an expensive war of the experts in a never-ending debate over the merits of shore protection devices. There are no winners in this fight and the current debate avoids the real issue: how to rebuild the shoreline so that seawalls, revetments and the like are unnecessary?"
14. **Interesting Fact:** Three of the people that are most active & speak up the most at hearings with the CCC and the City against our being able to protect our bluffs just happen to live on the East Side of Pacific Ave. & Circle Dr.. Thus if the taxpayers decide to buy and remove the homes on the west side guess where these activists will be living?

**Our beach sand came from inland erosion, not coastal erosion. Coastal rivers, now dammed up, used to bring sand to the shoreline. Ocean currents distributed it. Storms sometimes took it away. The rivers brought it back in time. "If man in his folly can cause so much destruction, he can also in his wisdom, so ably construct, ennoble and re-create".**

**Steve Aceti of Cal Coast said on 11-14-00, "Each wall has undergone so much scrutiny already, as will future walls, that I don't know why a generic EIR is necessary (for Solana Beach). Also, there is so little published information about the effect of seawalls that this is tricky ground for a small city to embark on cost-wise."**

**Let common sense prevail. In what possible way can those infills have any adverse effects? (Per Dr. Flick, "A wave does not know if it is hitting a natural sandstone seawall or one re-enforced with cement". The infills keep the problem from getting worse. The longer you wait without any degree of protection the worse the problem gets. If you feel it is important to waste money on another study, then so be it. But please evaluate our latest completed projects and DO NOT put a moratorium on those that need work done now, when next year may well be too late for them in**

terms of the expense involved. We too are citizens with the right to protect our property as much as those that are concerned with losing one inch of access next to a bluff that might tumble upon them and kill them or their children if they get within 45 feet of said bluff. They should be careful in what they ask for.

Below are some excerpts from an article written by Steve Aceti of Cal Coast. Mr. Aceti has put in as many hours as anyone I know in interest of the environment. As much as he too would rather that the homes were never built on the bluffs (the same for Mr. Ron Flick), they both recognize that the homes are there as well as is a great deal of infrastructure. Unless the taxpayers of Solana Beach want to buy us out we have every right to protect our property.

Some quotes from a Article of Steve Aceti's on July 5, 2000:

Recently, FEMA issued report a dire report on coastal erosion, predicting that more than 66,000 structures along California's shoreline would be destroyed over the next 60 years. While it is true that some private homes and structures are "too close to the edge," it is also a fact that there is a significant amount of public infrastructure in jeopardy along the coast, including major highways, sewage treatment facilities and beach access parking lots. With the prediction that homes and other buildings are likely to be destroyed because of coastal erosion, it would have been constructive to include an evaluation of how to restore sand to the beaches which used to be nature's way of protecting the coast.

The FEMA report was commissioned for one reason and one reason only – to justify charging property owners more money for insurance along the coast. In its fatalistic assessment, FEMA doesn't factor in the impact that sand replenishment and other efforts could have to stem the catastrophic losses it is predicting. Has FEMA forgotten that its brother and sister agencies, such as the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, are working feverishly to rebuild beaches and restore natural sediment flows? From a look at FEMA's suggested options for "dealing with the threat," it would appear that the answer to that question is "yes."

**The federal government has built dams, harbors, highways and flood control projects - all of which cause or accelerate erosion along the shoreline - and then it invests a significant amount of time and money figuring out how to impose a surcharge on coastal dwellers (a large percentage of the nation's population) for the damage which results from its bad coastal management practices. It's good that FEMA has taken a look at coastal erosion and its impact on development, but the findings should be used as justification for the federal government to step up its efforts to restore seriously eroded beaches. To fatalistically accept the fact that we are losing a critical resource and not do anything about it except to pass along the costs to property owners is not fair or prudent.**

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